Insurgent Groups in Chechnya

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RECENT EVENTS in Russia, the United States, the Middle East, and many other countries highlight a central problem in the war against terrorism. Today's terrorist is neither desperate nor isolated. In Russia, insurgents are well-led, amply financed, and efficiently organized into battalions, companies, platoons, and squads with all essential military occupational specialties from snipers, demolition specialists, rocket-propelled grenade gunners, to combat engineers.

Russia has encountered terrorism and insurgency before—in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989—and is facing them again as Russian federal forces carry out counterterrorism measures in the Chechen Republic. A knowledge of the classic elements of combat as taught in Russian military academies; that is, army and front operations encompassing hundreds of miles of territory, is not as applicable today as it once was, although the knowledge remains important. Increasingly, Russia's military academies emphasize combat actions in local insurgent conflicts, focusing on the lessons learned in Afghanistan and Russia's current experience in the northern Caucasus region.

Insurgents' Methods and Tactics

Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) units are currently working to uphold law and order and to provide public security in the North Caucasus region.[2] The various types of armed organizations the MDV confronts are usually located in Chechen territory and are commonly referred to as illegal armed formations. Insurgent guerrilla actions, usually raids and ambushes, take place on territory that the enemy knows well.

Insurgencies are nothing new to the MVD. For more than 50 years during the Soviet period, the MVD dealt with hot spots in central Asia, the northern Caucasus, western Ukraine, western Belarus, and the Baltic states. Currently, detachments of 60 to 100 insurgents form locally and become part of larger units under a unified command. Although deployed over a vast area, they operate with a single intent. Although their basic weapon is the rifle, they possess modern heavy weapons, including antiaircraft (AA) missile systems, recoilless rifles, and mortars.

Performing acts of terrorism in a guerrilla war requires special skills, knowledge, and abilities. Insurgents train in weapons, raids, terrorism, field survival, camouflage, and the use of propaganda. The training centers train the insurgents fairly well.

When the first Chechen conflict began in 1994, Russian troops encountered Chechnya's well-organized, standing armed forces equipped with weapons and hardware from virtually all branches of arms. As the conflict developed and their hardware was lost, armed bands switched over to partisan tactics. The insurgents obtain weapons by capturing them from Russian troops in ambushes and raids or by acquiring them illegally through third countries with the help of financial benefactors.

The insurgent groups' structure includes—

- A field commander and one or two deputies who make up his staff (often including former soldiers or trained MVD personnel).
- A bodyguard team that accompanies and protects the commander during combat or when he is in a base camp.
- A reconnaissance team and a network of scouts (the latter usually local civilians who are not part of the detachment).
- Signalmen.
- Special forces.
- Snipers.
- Riflemen.

When insurgents use a combination of explosive devices, they set up one demolition charge on a roadway surface to destroy vehicles, and a second charge (one or more remotely controlled fragmentation mines) above the road at a certain height (on a post, pole, hill, or tree) to destroy the assault force. The insurgents detonate the devices simultaneously or nearly so.

Additional insurgents support the detachment by obtaining food, ammunition, and other necessities. They might also provide liaison, security, or counterintelligence services.

Detachments consist of well-trained fighters, who are usually volunteers, but who are sometimes conscripts. Conscripts are usually inferior to volunteers in training, combat qualities, and mental preparation for combat. Exconvicts released from penal colonies, detention camps, and prisons, and criminals with outstanding arrest warrants are members of these armed bands. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that insurgents commonly use such tactics as robbery, plundering, marauding, and violence.

Chechen detachments are usually regional, with residents of a single village banding together in so-called "self-defense detachments." Often, residents of a single area form "national militia brigades and regiments." The detachments fight only in areas from which they are drawn.

When estimating an insurgent group's composition and numbers, one must also consider its reserves—sympathetic individuals who are outwardly law-abiding citizens with permanent places of residence but who have hidden weapons caches. Former insurgents might also belong to the reserves. During some disarmament programs, they "voluntarily" refused to support the insurgents, laid down their arms, and gained legal status. From time to time, the two reserve groups merge into active detachments to take part in large-scale actions. They also perform intelligence work and spread disinformation.

In Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, and Chechnya, mercenaries and volunteers from other regions and from abroad joined the insurgents. Because mercenaries are the best-trained and most combat-ready fighters, insurgents often use them in difficult missions that require a high degree of competence, as advisers for detachment commanders, and as instructors at training centers. The insurgents might put them in a separate detachment (or make them the core of a detachment) for combat involving terrorism and special operations.

Although many insurgents have served in the military and received military training, the insurgency sets up training centers or schools. Performing acts of terrorism in a guerrilla war requires special skills, knowledge, and abilities. Insurgents train in weapons, raids, terrorism, field survival, camouflage, and the use of propaganda. The training centers train the insurgents fairly well. In numerous conflicts, insurgent groups have demonstrated a high degree of effectiveness. A key factor in their success is their use of lessons learned from past partisan warfare.

Armed insurgent groups base their tactics on the following principles:

- Close ties with the local populace.
- Actions by small detachments and teams.
- Knowledge of and the skillful use of terrain, such as laying ambushes at tactically advantageous points.
- Active use of conditions of limited visibility, especially darkness.
- Careful selection of objectives and the development of simple, realistic plans of action.
- Thorough reconnaissance before undertaking actions. (Even when not attacking, the insurgents diligently and attentively monitor the actions of soldiers and police forces.)
- Secret and surprise actions and the use of military cunning.
- Suddenly opening fire at close range and then retreating to safety.
- Using ambushes and fire from unassailable locations in barely maneuverable terrain to cover a retreat and inflict losses.
- Close coordination among detachment personnel during all actions.
- Reliance on the exhaustion of law-enforcement personnel.
- Psychological operations in support of insurgent activities.
- Well-organized security and intelligence.

Expanding the Principles

Maintaining close ties with the local populace is a fundamental principle of insurgency operations. Local citizens provide insurgents with personnel, food, clothing, storage facilities, medical aid, and sometimes direct military help and other services. That is why the separatists try to instill in the locals

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the idea that rebel detachments are defenders of the people and spread lies about vicious acts supposedly committed by the forces of law and order. The insurgents brutally punish anyone in the local population who shows the slightest hint of any loyalty toward the federal forces, even if that means killing the people involved.

The most widespread insurgent technique is the use of small detachments dispersed over a large amount of territory to create the impression of a universal presence. In an address at West Point in 1962, U.S. President John F. Kennedy said, "War with insurgents, partisans, and bands is a new type of war, new in its intensity and old in its origins, a war that uses infiltration rather than attack, a war where victory is achieved by taxing and exhausting the forces of the opponent rather than by destroying him. It requires new strategy and tactics, specialized forces and new forms of combat."[3]

The insurgents compel the forces of law and order to operate in small units separated by a considerable distance from one another, which keeps them from taking advantage of mutual fire and communications support. Working in small groups, the rebels can tie down large formations.

The insurgents make full use of darkness, which provides them with concealment and the element of surprise; causes disorientation and panic among the personnel attacked; disrupts command and control; and ultimately, helps the insurgents achieve success even against numerically stronger forces. Insurgents engage in surprise attacks at night and then withdraw on previously chosen routes. They deliberately point pursuers toward nearby posts and garrisons of other federal troops. When they succeed in doing this, the slightest error in coordination and communications results in the federal forces firing on each other. The insurgents take advantage of darkness to conduct provocations during armistices or when negotiations are underway. The insurgent leaders then usually blame the provocations on third parties or on the forces of law and order.

Exhaustion of the enemy is one of the insurgency's most important goals. Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev said, "We will operate so that not a single occupying soldier will be able to walk freely on Chechen land. Whether he is on the move, in his base camp, sleeping, or eating, he will be in a constant sense of fear."[4]

Another time-honored and increasingly important insurgent principle is to generate psychological support for their activities. The primary goals of the

Russian forces under sniper fire.

Colonel General Gennadi Trochev's *My War*

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insurgency's psychological operations are to maintain combat morale among the insurgents, support their authority among the local population, and demoralize the forces of law and order. The insurgents use radio, television, and the press (local and foreign) for these purposes and to disseminate lies or to distort facts.

The insurgents' tactics are active and audacious. They rarely go on the defensive, doing so only in exceptional cases, such as defending base camps or selected built-up areas or when their enemies surround them or threaten their detachments.

Once the forces of law and order have established control over an entire area or most of an area, the insurgents shift to guerrilla warfare, ambushing lines of communications, and attacking small garrisons. The insurgents also use mines, booby traps, and snipers, and they conduct large-scale terrorist actions involving hostage taking.

Rebel commanders rely on the following principles:

- Do not enter into direct combat. Break off from the forces of law and order and take up new, better positions.
- Never remain in contact with the forces of law and order for long. Try to withdraw unnoticed and take up new, advantageous positions or hideouts.
- Attempt large-scale strikes only when sufficient forces are available.
- Use small units to attack individual soldiers, obtain weapons, or repel blows.
- Maintain psychological pressure on the forces of law and order by firing on them regularly.
- Use mortars, self-propelled howitzers, and other heavy weapons when attacking important objectives and fortified positions with significant forces concentrated in small areas, and use concentrated fire from "nomadic" weapons to inflict heavy losses.
- Conduct an organized withdrawal in small groups while deploying ambushes and delivering retaliatory fire if the forces of law and order launch a surprise attack on a broad front.

Insurgent Attacks

Insurgents commonly attack guard posts, regimental command posts, police headquarters, military headquarters, airfields, and warehouses in order to damage, destroy, or capture them. Insurgents perform careful reconnaissance and skillful disinformation before they attack, with the locals assisting in disinformation activities.

The insurgents study the guard systems, communications, obstacles, weapons positions, and approaches to their objectives. They determine defending troops' reinforcement capabilities (composition, movement times, and routes) and always use the element of surprise. About 30 men carry out the attack, and the group is divided into point reconnaissance, guard takedown, a covering team, the main body (the assault force), and sometimes a special diversionary group.

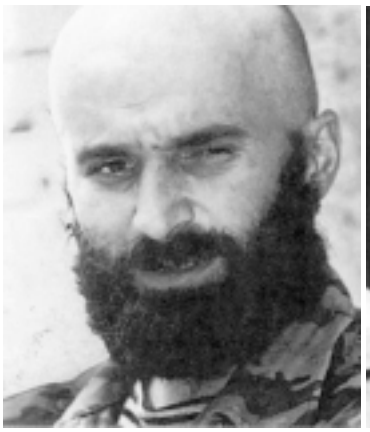
The point reconnaissance team moves toward the objective, noting any recent changes in the guard system and the most advantageous axes for attack and subsequent withdrawal. If the reconnaissance team unexpectedly encounters superior forces, it withdraws laterally from the insurgency's main body, but coordinates this withdrawal with the main body in an attempt to lead the MVD force into a fire sac. Accomplices from the local population sometimes conduct point reconnaissance.

The covering group covertly assumes positions near the objective. They block local rapid-response or reserve forces' potential maneuver routes and the lines of movement of federal forces' reserve elements who are assisting the garrison and sentries. The covering group provides fire support to the main force and then covers the detachment's withdrawal.

Moving behind the covering group, the main assault force uses a surprise attack to capture or destroy the objective. If the assault force cannot hold the objective, or if that was not the goal, the detachment leaves and quickly dissolves into small groups.

The attack on Regimental Command Post (CP) 10 in Chechnya on 20 January 1996 is an example of a typical insurgent attack. As darkness fell, a team of from 10 to 12 insurgents surrounded the CP unnoticed at a distance of 70 to 100 meters. They opened close-range fire from five directions simultaneously, injuring several people, destroying two armored personnel carriers (APCs), knocking out command and control, and disrupting the fire system. In the resulting confusion, security personnel left their posts and withdrew haphazardly to the regimental field site.

On 31 May 1996, a rebel detachment captured a regimental CP near Shuanya. Before they attacked, the insurgents had conducted detailed studies of the daily routines at a number of regimental CPs in the Nozhayt-Yurtov, Kurchaloyev, and Gudermes areas



(*Clockwise from upper left*):

Shamil Basayev, the mastermind behind most Chechen military operations.

The author's father, General Anatoliy Kulikov of the MVD (*left*), at one time commanded all Russian forces in Chechnya. At right is Colonel General (LTG) Gennadi Trochev, commander of the North Caucasus Military District.

One of several Chechen women Russian forces accused of being snipers.

Chechen guerillas are especially adept at setting urban ambushes.

Radio devices can serve for a common Chechen tactic—remote detonation of explosive devices.

photos from Colonel General Gennadi Trochev's *My War*

Exhaustion of the enemy is one of the insurgency's most important goals. Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev said, "We will operate so that not a single occupying soldier will be able to walk freely on Chechen land. Whether he is on the move, in his base camp, sleeping, or eating, he will be in a constant sense of fear."

of the Chechen Republic. The insurgents chose the least fortified CP, one that was badly situated in a basin between two hills, which enabled the insurgents to surround it. Before dusk they directed intense mortar, guided-rocket antitank, grenade launcher, and rifle fire on the CP for about an hour.

In the first few minutes of the battle the insurgents destroyed an APC and a maintenance-transport vehicle; blew up ammunition stockpiles; and knocked a field radio station off the air. At the same time, the insurgents' covering group mined approach routes, and diversionary groups fired on neighboring military forces. A ZU-23-2 gun crew, which was supposed to be on alert, was on a detail some 70 meters from its weapon and was cut off from it. (The ZU-23-2 is a 23-millimeter, self-propelled, AA gun usable in ground combat.) The CP's defenders used all of their ammunition in undisciplined fire in an unsuccessful attempt to repel the attack.

The insurgents had, in effect, "disarmed" the garrison, capturing 26 men, a BTR-80 APC, a ZIL-131 Russian radio truck, a ZU-23-2 AA gun, an AGS-17 grenade launcher, and all of the defenders' small arms. A later review of the CP's capture indicated that unofficial friendly relations with the local population had helped make the attack successful.

These examples were not isolated incidents. Local residents near the federal sentries' duty stations, while never showing any aggressive intentions, made contact with service personnel; brought them food, cigarettes, and liquor; bought fuel and lubricants; or offered to buy ammunition from them. When the soldiers relaxed their vigilance, the locals agreed to sell them whatever was wanted. At dusk, when the sentry changed, the locals arrived with their "merchandise." When they got close enough to the soldiers to do so, they quickly overpowered and disarmed them. Then they disarmed, captured, or killed the remaining personnel.

In addition to attacking with the goal of destroying or exhausting garrison sentries, the insurgents systematically fired on them. Operating in groups of from 5 to 10, primarily after dark, several insurgent groups aimed at a single objective, with one member of a group drawing fire on himself, after which all the others fired on the answering weapons from other directions. The insurgents also conducted "drive-by" shootings from rapidly moving vehicles.

Snipers

Snipers represent a huge threat to Russian federal forces. In many conflicts with insurgents the effect of sniper actions has been so great that some experts rightly refer to these conflicts as "sniper wars." Insurgent forces equip snipers with special sniper weapons, automatic weapons, and rifles (including sporting rifles) adapted for sniper purposes. The typical sniper is a professional who plans his actions in detail. He selects advantageous and little-noticed positions in attics; corner apartments in upper stories of buildings from where he can fire in several directions; factory smokestacks; tower cranes; and traveling and overhead cranes. Insurgents might also equip sniper positions as hideouts where they can conceal weapons and munitions.

Snipers are skilled at creating the right conditions for killing as many people as possible in a single action. After wounding one soldier, usually in the extremities, the sniper inflicts similar wounds on other soldiers or medics who come to the injured person's aid. The sniper then finishes them all off. Snipers' primary victims are defenseless personnel.

An insurgent group might include one or two snipers (an observer and a shooter) and combat engineers who mine the firing position after withdrawal. After occupying dominant buildings or the lower floors of buildings, the sniper group can fire on the objective, sometimes at random. Under cover of the noise of battle, the sniper can select and destroy the most important targets.

Ambushes

The ambush is the most efficient and frequently used method of insurgent warfare. The most likely spots for ambushes are bridges, confined areas, hidden turns in a road, slopes and crests of hills, large forests, mountain passes, and gorges. The insurgents always choose the location and their equipment carefully. The choice must assure concealment of the ambush's location and guarantee the element of surprise, effective fire from weapons and munitions, and the opportunity for rapid withdrawal.

The insurgents intend ambushes either to impede or to destroy (or capture) the enemy. The type of ambush chosen depends on the combat situation, the correlation of forces, and the terrain. If the purpose is to delay the movement of forces and assets, to alter their direction, or to force a premature deploy-

The first group opens fire on a convoy's flank, initiating the battle, and then withdraws, drawing the convoy's attention toward it. The other groups act in a similar manner, forcing federal forces to repel attacks from several directions or to advance in various directions. In some circumstances, the ambushed force loses control of the situation, including losing its command and control. If that happens, the force is doomed.

ment into combat positions, then the insurgents can use a significantly smaller force than they would need for ambushes to destroy or capture the enemy. While only a few insurgents can detain a company-size or smaller unit for several hours, destroying the unit requires a militant force of comparable size. Depending on the location, the tactical formation, and the method of action, ambushes might be what are called meeting, parallel, or circular.

The meeting ambush. The meeting ambush is usually stationary and set up on the federal force's route of movement. The insurgents' goal is to pin units down or to destroy advance units. Insurgents often use the meeting ambush on small units and the transport assets that follow behind them independently. The guerrillas set up the ambush site well in advance, prepare reserve and false positions, and select withdrawal routes. They often use the meeting ambush in combination with a simultaneous feint on some other objective to cause reserve forces to move toward that objective.

The parallel ambush. Insurgents use the parallel ambush along a convoy's axis of advance. The parallel ambush's objectives are the convoy's security force, reconnaissance elements, rear columns, and sometimes the main force. The main body of insurgents disperses along one or both sides of the movement route.

The circular ambush. The most difficult ambush to prepare and execute is the circular ambush. Anticipating the movement of enemy forces and assets, insurgent groups position themselves along the perimeter of a preselected area. The first group opens fire on a convoy's flank, initiating the battle, and then withdraws, drawing the convoy's attention toward it. The other groups act in a similar manner, forcing federal forces to repel attacks from several directions or to advance in various directions. In some circumstances, the ambushed force loses control of the situation, including losing its command and control. If that happens, the force is doomed.

Depending on the mission, forces of 10 to 20 insurgents carry out ambushes, although sometimes ambush forces might exceed 100. They position themselves along several lines. The size of the ambushing detachment varies depending on the goal and the forces available. The detachment might include a fire or strike group; a diversionary group; a

Aftermath of a Chechen insurgent ambush.

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group that impedes the maneuver or withdrawal of federal forces (pins them down); a reserve group; and a group that observes, handles communications, and informs. If the detachment has heavy weapons, the detachment will also have a transport group.

The primary force is the fire or strike group that kills soldiers and destroys equipment. Positioned near the zone of the planned actions, the primary force includes riflemen, a group for capturing prisoners and weapons, and demolitions specialists.

The diversionary group takes a position some distance away from the ambush kill zone. The diversionary group's mission is to draw retaliatory fire from the security force (and sometimes the main force) and to support the strike group's surprise actions. The diversionary group is the first to act. The signal to begin might be a mine explosion or a demolition charge. Positioned along the same axis as the strike group, the diversionary group fires on approaching federal forces from a greater distance and then withdraws. As members of the attacked federal force pursue the diversionary group, they open themselves to a flank attack.

Occupying positions along the presumed axes of the federal force's movement, usually along the only possible axes, the group that impedes the maneuver and withdrawal of the federal force lays out land mines and other obstacles along these axes. If necessary, the reserve group reinforces the strike group or the blocking group. The reserve group's mission is to support the main force's exit from the battle. The group monitors the situation and covers the detachment's flanks and rear.

The group that observes, communicates, and informs does not participate in the battle; its concern is reconnaissance, determining when federal forces will move out from their encampment area and in what direction. The insurgents in this group listen in on conversations over nonsecure radio nets, follow the convoys, and report on their movement to the detachment's main force. Personnel in this group can operate without weapons. They "land" like birds on the convoy's tail and later pass by as though they were just random travelers. The transport group hides out along the detachment's planned lines of withdrawal and stands ready to evacuate the detachment and any prisoners or weapons taken.

In a typical ambush, the insurgents usually allow federal scouts and security elements moving ahead of the convoy to pass by. Using a remotely controlled blast mine, the insurgents knock out the main force's forward vehicles and then concentrate fire on command vehicles and the center of the convoy.

In one successful rebel action, insurgents ambushed an infantry regiment's logistics convoy near an observation post in Yaryshmarda. The insurgents rigged a remotely controlled blast mine in a road that ran along the western edge of the area's defense. The mine blew up the convoy's lead tank. The insurgents then destroyed the convoy's BMD-1 command vehicle, killing the convoy's commander and forward air controller, and jammed the UHF command frequency to sever the convoy's communications with its base. Firing at the convoy for about 90 minutes at close range from prepared positions, 150 insurgents in two detachments and four combat teams killed most of convoy's personnel and destroyed nearly all of its equipment.

Insurgents often set up active ambushes to kill the greatest possible number of personnel. They plant guides among the local population to steer federal force reconnaissance elements, guards, and small convoys directly to the active ambushes.

Terrorism

Terrorism is one of the most effective weapons in the insurgents' arsenal and includes a broad spectrum of actions. Insurgents sometimes capture federal soldiers or civilians and take unprecedented numbers of hostages, perhaps hundreds. They might blow up facilities and kill high-level officials in the process.

The insurgents design their terrorist actions to have the greatest possible psychological effect, not only on military personnel but also on the civilian population of entire regions. Using surprise, audacity, cunning, resolve, and cruelty, insurgents use the classic terrorist arsenal of raids, hostage taking, blackmail, and threats.

Hostage taking has a special place in the terrorist arsenal. Field commanders and individual rebel groups take hostages to defeat Russian federal forces and to exchange the hostages for captured insurgents. They also take hostages in order to collect ransom. Insurgents do not attempt hostage taking against MVD troops or police who remain cautious and vigilant; set up 360-degree observation; are ready to repel an attack; and do not have unauthorized contacts with the local population. On the other hand, carelessness and self-assurance on the part of com-

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manders, soldiers, or police can create the right conditions for hostage taking and even provoke it.

A typical example of hostage taking occurred on 12 December 1994 during an antimilitary rally as Russian troops were leaving Khasavyurt in the Dagestan Republic. A group of insurgents blocked an MVD military convoy, while other insurgents, hidden among the crowd and disguised as women and children, pressed up to the convoy's vehicles. They threatened convoy personnel with weapons and hand grenades and captured 40 service personnel, two APCs, and a ZIL-131 vehicle. The insurgents, all of whom were local residents, had placed heavy vehicles in advance in neighboring streets to close them off and prevent any maneuver by the convoy. A badly chosen route, indecisiveness on the part of commanders and soldiers, and a loss of vigilance and combat alertness were also reasons for the hostage taking.

Hostage taking of federal force service members, police, or small groups usually follows a set pattern. The insurgents select a location for the attack that is far enough away from an MVD or other military unit's position so that no signal of the attack can be picked up and assistance cannot arrive in time. Preferred areas for the attack include marketplaces, coffee houses, food stands, and water sources.

By observing the federal force or other prospective victims over a period of several days, the insurgents determine the number of people in the unit, when they appear, their intentions, and the nature of their actions. The insurgents attack when their targets are in no position to repel them, such as when their hands are busy or when their attention is distracted as when they are in a coffee house or an outdoor market.

Armed with small-caliber weapons and grenades, the insurgents usually attack in a force two to three times greater in size than the number of victims they target. The insurgents operate in two teams, an attack team and a cover and evacuation team, the latter in light vehicles positioned along withdrawal routes.

The insurgents are audacious. They try to get right next to their victims and then use weapons to threaten, intimidate, and demoralize them. Soldiers who do not remain calm or are indecisive quickly lose their ability to resist. Once insurgents take control of the situation, victims who do resist are killed immediately. The insurgents exploit any oversight or lack of discipline. Personnel who enter into unofficial relationships with the local population frequently become the targets of such actions. Another ruse is for teenagers or young men of about the same age to become acquainted with careless or undisciplined soldiers, invite them to a familiar apartment or house, then, under some harmless pretext, lead them to a different place and take them hostage.

The guerrillas hold their hostages in special, well-guarded camps and field prisons in areas that are hard to access. Insurgents trade the hostages among themselves for work details. Sometimes the insurgents demand ransom from hostages' relatives. The insurgents execute prisoners they cannot exchange for ransom or for the freedom of insurgents that federal forces have captured. The guerrillas videotape these "show" executions, distribute the videos to the local population, and use them to demoralize and frighten federal troops.

Although insurgent groups usually operate near their home bases, they sometimes conduct raids. Typically involving mercenary detachments, the raids use covert movement along planned routes in combination with other attacks and ambushes.

The insurgents use infiltration to concentrate their forces and assets in the area of a large-scale action. Carefully observing Russian checkpoints, they determine in advance which types of cargo the Russians do not inspect and which duty personnel are not vigilant. Unarmed insurgents pretending to be local residents move legally in small groups or individually along several routes and once they pass beyond checkpoints, they convene at staging areas or arms rooms where the insurgents have placed weapons in advance. They usually transport weapons to the staging area on large-capacity vehicles, hiding the weapons inside cargo that is virtually impossible to inspect, such as agricultural products or loose materials. The Chechens also attempt bribery to avoid inspections at federal force checkpoints.

Mines

With virtually no limit to the scope, place, or time of its use, mine warfare is an indispensable part of any insurgent movement. The insurgents use Russian-made mines, including the TM-57 (a pressure-operated blast mine), the TM-62 AT mine, the PMN-2 antipersonnel mine (a blast mine), the OZM-72 (a bounding, fragmentation mine), and the MON-50 or

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MON-100 (a directional fragmentation mine). They also use homemade blast mines and grenades with trip wires.

The insurgents prefer remotely (wire) detonated, handmade blast mines that destroy combat equipment; mines that kill personnel who are mounted on assault vehicles; or combinations of the two. A blast mine consists of one or more types of ammunition (usually artillery rounds) of various calibers; an electrical blasting cap; an extra charge of TNT; and an ignition wire. The insurgents place the mines on a road surface or shoulder (about 2 to 8 meters apart) or even in sewer lines. Sometimes the insurgents place the charge on the ground disguised as a pile of trash or construction materials and cover the charge with scraps of metal or screws, bolts, and other metal objects to increase the destructive effect. The insurgents place demolition charges in destroyed or burned-out vehicles and equipment so that when the charge explodes, the explosion sends out a powerful torrent of fragments, killing personnel in a radius of up to 70 meters. On mountain roads, the insurgents set up explosive devices in treetops or on rocky hillsides.

In built-up, mountainous, or forested areas, insurgents set up improvised explosive devices, using trip wires, such as "spider webs" made from wire from the guidance systems of AT guided rockets, small switches, tree branches, or brush. The height at which the insurgents set the trip wires varies. The web might be horizontal, vertical, or both. The insurgents might also use false wires.

When insurgents use a combination of explosive devices, they set up one demolition charge on a roadway surface to destroy vehicles, and a second charge (one or more remotely controlled fragmentation mines) above the road at a certain height (on a post, pole, hill, or tree) to destroy the assault force. The insurgents detonate the devices simultaneously or nearly so. To determine the exact time of the explosion, the insurgents set up a an orientation point (a "sight") composed of several easily visible objects that do not attract attention and that are aligned with the planned target. The demolition man hides about 500 to 1,000 meters from the charge. As soon as the intended target aligns with the orientation markers, that is, is in the "sight," the demolition man detonates the charge.

The insurgents' cunning, inventiveness, and insidiousness are almost without limit. For example, they placed a 5- to 10-kilogram explosive charge on a roadbed and concealed a MON-50 directional fragmentation mine in the lamp of a power pole alongside the road with contact wires running between the power plate and a removable device on the powerline. When the armored target entered the kill zone, the insurgents sent voltage to the electrical blasting cap. The explosion in the roadbed knocked out the armored vehicle and the downward-directed explosion from the fragmentation mine in the light pole simultaneously killed the personnel mounted on the armored vehicle.

Countering an Insurgency

Both Russian forces and insurgents benefit from new combat assets, but the fundamentals on which the insurgents rely in their armed struggle with the forces of law and order remain the principles of guerrilla warfare. A force that fights insurgents must know their tactics well, their strong and weak points, and if necessary, be able to use their own methods against them. Predicting the actions of armed bands is virtually impossible. Therein lies the greatest challenge in doing combat with them. Because no one knows what insurgents will do next, everyone must guard against them and their attacks even while fighting them.

Success for Russia's MVD and internal troops in fighting insurgents in the North Caucasus depends on the following:

- Knowledge of the principles of insurgent and guerrilla warfare.
- Countering insurgents' cunning and insidiousness.
- Using intelligent and correctly selected combat methods.
- A well-organized intelligence effort. ***MR***

NOTES

1. This article is the translated text of a speech Colonel Sergey A. Kulikov gave at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in December 2002. Kulikov was an MVD special forces commander during the second Chechen war (1999 to the present) and a liaison officer between the Russian Ministry of Defense Armed Forces and Russia's MVD during the first Chechen war (1994 to 1996).
2. Russia's MVD has its own troops that currently number about 200,000. Russia has used its MVD troops heavily in Chechnya.
3. John F. Kennedy, quoted in Rick Atkinson, *Long Gray Line: The American Journey of West Point's Class of 1966* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989).
4. Publishing information unavailable. Dzhokar Dudayev was the president of the Chechen Republic when the first Chechen war began in 1994. A rocket killed him in April 1996.